

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5685

UNCLAS SAN JOSE 4274

HUME FROM AGATT

SAN JOSE 4274 SENT USDA/FAS WASHDC, PANAMA, GUATEMALA, SAN SAL-
VADOR IS SENT TO YOU FOR YOUR INFO:

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, CS

SUBJECT: INFORMATION ON EFFECTS ENERGY SITUATION ON
AGRICULTURAL TRADE

REF: FASTO CIRCULAR 296

SUMMARY: THERE ARE SEVERAL EXCEPTIONS, BUT THUS FAR NO
SIGNIFICANT EFFECT OF ENERGY SITUATION ON AGRICULTURAL
TRADE COSTA RICA OR PANAMA.

1. COSTA RICA FACING SEVERE GASOLINE SHORTAGE, BUT
NOT ALL DUE TO WORLD-WIDE ENERGY SITUATION. THIS CAUSING
SOME LOCAL TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS, ESPECIALLY FOR SMALL
FARMERS. HOWEVER, FOR THE TIME BEING, DIESEL AND BUNKER
SUPPLIES ADEQUATE, AND HARVESTING AND PROCESSING OF
EXPORT COMMODITIES PROGRESSING NORMALLY WITH RESPECT TO
ENERGY USED AND REQUIREMENTS. THE GOVERNMENT GIVING
SUPPLY PREFERENCES TO FARMERS FOR PETROLEUM PRODUCTS.

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FERTILIZER COSTS HAVE SKYROCKETED AND COULD HAVE IMPACT

ON CROPS LIKE COFFEE, SUGAR-CANE AND BANANAS IN FUTURE,
BUT NOT ON CURRENT HARVESTING OR HARVESTING ABOUT TO GET
UNDERWAY.

2. RECENTLY DUE TO LOCAL SCARCITIES AND LACK OF SUPPLIES
IN CACM COUNTRIES, COSTA RICA PURCHASED RELATIVELY LARGE
QUANTITY BEANS FROM U.S. THERE ARE PROBLEMS WITH SHIP
SCHEDULING FOR THESE BEANS.

3. IN FUTURE REPORTS, WILL ATTEMPT GREATER DETAILS
WHERE POSSIBLE, BUT GENERALLY HARD TO SEE SIGNIFICANT
EFFECT ENERGY SITUATION ON COSTA RICA OR PANAMA AS MAJOR
EXPORT CROPS OF COFFEE, SUGAR-CANE, AND BANANAS ARE HAND
HARVESTED. ALSO, HAD LABOR HIGH IN LOCAL CONSUMPTION
CROPS LIKE BEANS AND CORN. LOCAL PROCESSING OF SUGAR-
CANE, COFFEE OR BEEF NOT PETROLEUM INTENSIVE.
MOST TRACTORS AND TRUCKS ALREADY DIESEL. # PROBLEMS OF
ENERGY SITUATION LIKELY TO BE WITH IMPORTS AND SHIPPING
PROBLEMS AS IS NOW ALREADY BEING EXPERIENCED WITH BEANS.

SHOULD DIESEL BECOME SHORT, COULD CAUSE VERY SERIOUS
PROBLEM AS COUNTRY USUALLY NEEDS TO SWITCH TO DIESEL
GENERATORS FROM HYDRO-ELECTRIC ONES AS THE DRY SEASON
PROGRESSES.

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